



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2004

No. 109

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for 5 minutes.

TRIBUTE TO BEN JEFFERSON: VETERAN, LEADER, CITIZEN

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, it is my sad duty to inform this House and the people of Arizona of the passing of the Veterans Affairs Coordinator for the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Arizona, Ben Jefferson. Ben lost his battle with leukemia at 1 o'clock a.m. Arizona time Monday. Mary and I were privileged to be with Ben Sunday afternoon prior to his passing, and we reflect back on a remarkable life of service.

Mr. Speaker, too often what we do is described as public service. That is an honor and an accolade, but ultimately it is somewhat inaccurate, for what we are involved in is public office. But public service is a dimension that does not require election to office; it instead requires a spirit of servanthood, and that spirit of service sums up the life of Ben Jefferson.

Ben moved to Phoenix as a very young boy from Louisiana. He saw Phoenix grow, and, as he grew, so too did that responsibility of service, made manifest by a career in the Navy, a ca-

reer which saw him as a medical corpsman in Korea, which saw him again answer the call to duty in Vietnam, which literally took him around the world, even for a year's duty at the research station at the South Pole.

Ben had a heart for people. And how fortunate I was, and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, those of us who serve here are honored by one of the gratifying mysteries of running for public office, which is that good people cross your path, and, more amazingly, those good people are willing to donate their time and their energy and their enthusiasm, first to campaigns and then as support staff.

So it was for Ben Jefferson. After a career in the Navy, after a career in business, stepping forward first in a campaign, and then assuming a role that he prepared for throughout his life, that of service to our Nation's veterans and the important role that the military plays, not only for retirees, but for those young people who aspire to attend a service academy.

It was Ben Jefferson who put together the groups for the Army and the Navy and the Air Force, who would review the candidates and candidacies of those who aspire to attend our Nation's academies. Ben Jefferson would be along my side when I would have one of the most gratifying experiences any Member of this House can have, when you call a young person and their family to inform them that they have been accepted at one of our military academies.

The same Ben Jefferson would take calls from veterans who had questions about their benefits, veterans who needed help at the hospital, veterans who had fallen on hard times, and always Ben Jefferson was willing to help.

We celebrate his life, even as we mourn his passing, his wife, Bette, his children, his relatives who will gather in Arizona later this week to remember this remarkable man.

At one point in his life he thought he would be called into the ministry. But it turned out his ministry was not from the pulpit, it was not as a pastor per se. Instead, in the spirit of James in the New Testament, it was not wrapped up in talk and good wishes, it was service and action and stepping forward to help people. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, on what became his deathbed, Ben Jefferson spoke about constituents in need and friends who faced similar challenges of disease, always in a spirit of what can I do to help?

In those last minutes when Mary and I were with Ben and with his wife Bette and with other loved ones, I could not help but reflect on the words I think he has heard by now: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Ben Jefferson: Veteran, leader, citizen. We will always remember you and all you did for the people of Arizona.

ENDING LAWSUIT ABUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is recognized during morning hour debates.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, frivolous, parasitic lawsuits are a clear and present danger to the economic health of the United States. They clog our courts, generate billions of dollars in administrative fees, artificially raise insurance premiums, kill jobs, stifle investment and innovation and otherwise produce little else for American society but headaches and lawyer jokes.

It has been and remains a principle of the Republican congressional majority to rein in trial lawyers and their predatory, self-serving litigation, thereby protecting American jobs and companies from their crippling effects.

The pestilent culture of hyper-litigation now corrupting our legal system may be championed in the name of "the little guy," but the only thing little about its true beneficiaries is their

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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